

~~SENSITIVE~~

CIA/SAVA /WVIND 710313



WEEKLY VIETNAM INDICATORS

Week Ending 13 March 1971

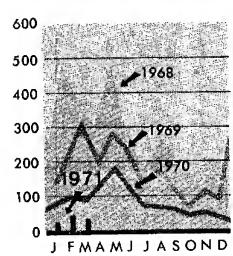
NSA Declassification/Release instructions on File.

For the President Only

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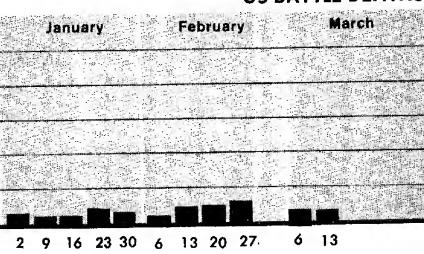
SOUTH VIETNAM WEEKLY INDICATORS

1968-1971
Weekly average for each month

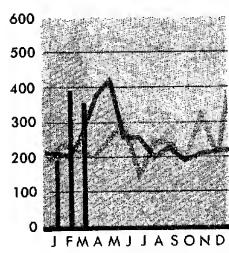


DECEMBER 1970 - MARCH 1971
Weekly data as reported

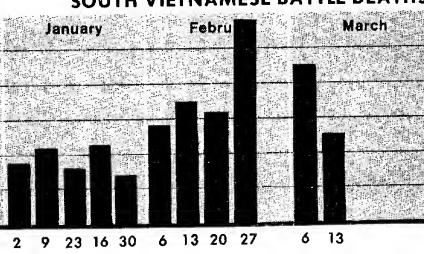
US BATTLE DEATHS



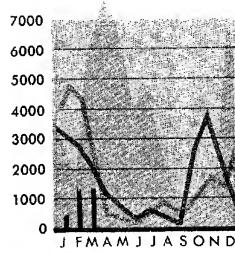
remained at virtually the same level -- 41 this week versus last week's 40.



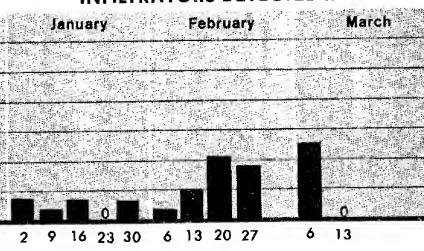
SOUTH VIETNAMESE BATTLE DEATHS



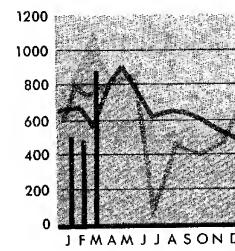
dropped sharply from last week's 458 to 262, reflecting the relative lull in fighting in LAM SON 719 and Cambodia. The official total will change as late reports are received and will be lower than the figures released to the press by the GVN.



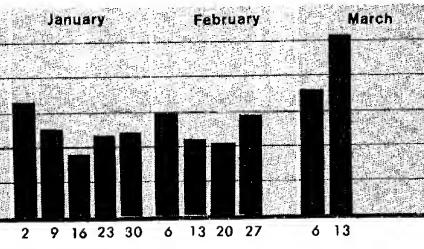
INFILTRATORS DETECTED IN PIPELINE



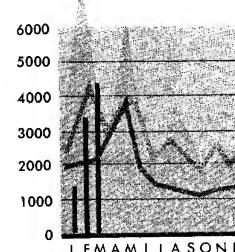
No new infiltration groups were detected in the pipeline during the week. The total number of infiltrators since 1 October 1970 remain at an estimated 48,300 - 49,800.



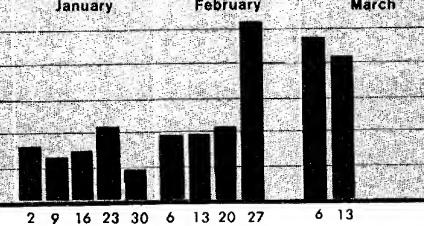
ENEMY-INITIATED INCIDENTS



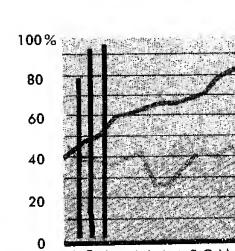
rose from last week's 737 to 1,023, but includes over 540 earlier AAA firings not previously reported.



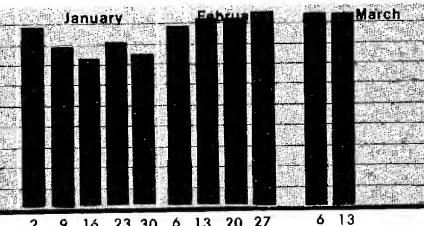
ENEMY KILLED IN ACTION



dropped to 4,003 from the 4,767 of last week.



SOUTH VIETNAMESE EFFECTIVENESS



as measured by the percentage of enemy killed by GVN forces remained at 94%, the same as last week.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Enemy Activity

In Operation LAM SON 719, ARVN has pulled back from the Tchepone area and is in the process of realigning its forces. Enemy forces are now arrayed north and south of Route 9 in an apparent attempt to sandwich major ARVN units along that road. These maneuverings tend to confirm intercepted Communist messages which express a determination to trap ARVN forces in Laos by preventing their withdrawal along Route 9. Other intercepted messages discuss the demoralization of some enemy units. This sagging morale is generally attributed to U.S. air strikes.

In northwestern Laos, the Chinese Communists continued to increase the number and caliber of their antiaircraft guns protecting their road construction troops. Elsewhere in Laos, the intensity of enemy pressure on Luang Prabang has again slackened, and there have been no significant actions on either the Long Tieng or south Laos fronts since friendly forces withdrew from Site 22 on 9 March. Along Route 23, Lao government forces committed to Operation DESERT RAT continue to keep Route 23 under surveillance and harassment. These forces are also continuing to move toward Muong Phine.

In South Vietnam and Cambodia, enemy action has generally been light. The ARVN dry season operation in the Chup area has tapered off as friendly units refit and regroup along Route 7. Enemy forces near Chup are now deployed in a manner which indicates they are determined to defend their bases in this area. In South Vietnam's MR 4, COMINT has disclosed the movement of the NVA 18B Regiment to the U Minh Forest area. This move probably represents an enemy attempt to improve the Communist position in this region where, under persistent ARVN pressure, Communist fortunes have suffered considerable erosion.

Enemy Infiltration

No detections of regular infiltration groups were made in either North Vietnam or Laos during the past week. Thus, the estimate of personnel moving toward South Vietnam/Cambodia since 1 October 1970 remains at some 48,300 - 49,800. A 9 March General Directorate of Rear Services message reporting on a 170-man group which was to move with another unidentified group constitutes the first southward personnel movement detected in North Vietnam since 6 January 1971. This isolated reflection of personnel movement in North Vietnam, however, by no means constitutes a reopening of the "Vinh window" nor does it offer any real promise of providing the extensive data which we previously received. Indeed, the low level of message traffic available from the northern portion of the infiltration system means that further time will elapse before the actual level of 1971 infiltration starts can be determined.

Communist Developments

COSVN is in the process of establishing a radio communications network which, when complete on about 15 March, will serve the Cambodian Communist Party apparatus. For the purpose of this new network, Cambodia has been divided into five separate Communist regions. The establishment of a Cambodian network and its linkage to the Hanoi-COSVN system (creating a communications net similar to that which existed during the French-Viet Minh war) underlines the Lao Dong Party's efforts to breathe new life into the fledgling Cambodian Party organization.

Other Developments

A plethora of conflicting coup rumors has been received from Phnom Penh with virtually every major Cambodian personality involved with one or more of the alleged factions. Acting Prime Minister Sirik Matak's story that the government has foiled a plot to restore the monarchy was probably surfaced to allay the fears of Khmer Krom leaders and other military officers loyal to Lon Nol that Matak was planning a coup of his own. He may also be using the "plot" theme to undercut Chief of Staff General Srey Saman whom he has been trying to ease out of office. The uncertainty of what role in

Cambodian affairs Lon Nol will have when he returns from Hawaii seems to be at the heart of the problem. A "Royalist" faction that in some stories includes Sirik Matak, but doesn't in others, may see Lon Nol's absence as a propitious time -- as it was in the case of Sihanouk -- to ease him out of office. Equally plausible is the possibility that officers loyal to Lon Nol are inflating the coup rumors to justify action against Sirik Matak, with whom they are generally at odds, in the name of protecting Lon Nol. There is no hard evidence that any actual coup plots are being or have been hatched, but the playing of Asian-style political games has produced the makings of at least a teapot tempest in Phnom Penh.

~~Top Secret~~